

Appleby Archaeology Group January 2006

Appleby Archaeology held its Annual General Meeting on January 10th followed by a Member's Evening when two of the group's working archaeologists were the speakers.

Martin Railton spoke first and his title was *Run out of Time Team; Working as a Field Archaeologist in North East England*. Martin works for Archaeological Services, Durham University, which undertakes commercial work, runs student training digs and community projects. Martin noticed early on that someone had written across one of their vans "Run out of Time Team" a reflection on the impact that series has made on public awareness of archaeology.

Martin explained that much of the commercial archaeology undertaken is a result of PPG 16 (Planning Policy Guideline 16), which sets out the government policy on archaeological remains and how they should be preserved and recorded. It makes the developers responsible for any impact of a development on the archaeological resource. Any development from building an extension to a house to a full scale urban development has to go to the County Archaeologist who then determines the nature of the archaeological work to be undertaken. It then goes out to tender to archaeological contractors. The Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) set the standards and guidelines for field work.

The types of archaeological work that may be undertaken fall into five main categories: desk-based assessments, archaeological evaluations, excavations, watching-briefs and building recording. Initially a desk based assessment, involving documentary and map research, is done to determine the likely extent of archaeological remains, and the strategy to deal with them. A field evaluation may follow to investigate the nature of the archaeological resource within a specified area. This may be done by geophysical survey or by digging trial trenches or test pits. This may reveal the need for an excavation to examine and record the archaeological remains in the specified area. There is a requirement to disseminate the information obtained. Martin gave as an example the redevelopment of a car show room site in Newcastle where test pits showed evidence of Hadrian's wall and further excavation revealed the wall, ditch and rows of defensive pits called 'cippi' pits. The archaeology has now been preserved and the foundations of the proposed flats at the site have been redesigned to avoid damaging the wall.

Another category is a watching brief when work is monitored so that any archaeological deposits

can be recorded and if practical preserved. This would be asked for when the presence of deposits is likely but can not be identified in advance. Martin illustrated this with pictures from the demolition of brick works at Crook County Durham where nine early kilns were identified and a photographic survey and record was made before new building work proceeded.

The fifth category is the archaeological recording of standing structures to compile lasting records and to formulate a strategy for conservation, alteration or repair. Martin illustrated this category by the drawings and photographic survey done at a former Italian prisoner of war camp at Harperley near Crook. Twelve buildings including sleeping huts, cook house, canteen, chapel, officers mess and cells were recorded prior to the redevelopment of the site as a leisure facility.

Martin concluded by saying that one of aspect of his work that he enjoyed was the variety and never knowing where the next project might be or what the archaeology might reveal.

Trish Crompton, who works for North Pennines Archaeology, followed by speaking of her experience of *Digging in Slovakia*. She has spent the last two summers running 6 week training excavations, for up to seven British students, at a monastery in Slovakia, under the supervision of the local museum director. The project is funded by the EU, organised through Grampus Heritage and Training Ltd based in Cumbria.

Slovakia is a small central European country which gained its independence in 1993. The site is at Sahy near to the Hungarian border and the monastery stands on a hillock above the river Ipeľ. The extant monastery is 18th century. Below this building are the remains of a monastery which was first built in the 12th century and was sacked by the Ottoman Turks in the 16th century. The building was used until the 1950s and plans to restore it were abandoned with the fall of Communism. The current excavations hope to discover and record more of the original buildings. To date trenches have revealed evidence of earlier floor levels, walls and timbers and signs of burning probably at the time of the sacking. The first artefact found was a metal window shutter from the 18th century building. To date three skeletons have been found. Sadly there are few back up services such as dating, a very different picture that described by Martin.

Slovakia has rich heritage of medieval buildings and many remain unspoilt. At the weekends Trish and her students travelled to see some and the group were shown some beautiful

photographs of these buildings. One example was Spis Castle, a spectacular medieval castle, dating from the 13th century, which stands in the Tetras Mountains near the Polish border. It is one of the biggest complexes of its kind in central Europe and is now being developed as a tourist attraction. Several sites had sequences of buildings from medieval to gothic to Russian Orthodox covering a period of over 600 years. Trish concluded her talk by describing Budapest and showing photographs of buildings dating from the medieval period to the very recent past. One such modern building is a museum built to record the history of the Second World War and the Communist Regime and named The House of Terror.

Both speakers took questions from the floor before being thanked and warmly applauded.

The next meeting will be on the Tuesday 7th February at 7.30pm, in the Supper Room Market Hall Appleby, when Gareth Davies and Trish Crompton, North Pennines Archaeology will talk on Dilston Castle Hexham. .